

July 2006

Dear Fellow Members of the Guild:

One of the outcomes of the Council's last meeting was a desire to renew the connections between the Guild in this country and the Guild in the mother country. My invitation to the English Guild's President, The Rt Rev'd Keith Newton SSC, Bishop of Richborough, to come to be with us for the Annual Requiem this year has been accepted and he will be preaching and pontificating at the Requiem on 11 November 2006 at eleven o'clock at the Church of the Resurrection in New York. We are delighted that he will be with us for the Requiem and the Council Meeting, and we look forward to welcoming him. The professional Choir of the Church of the Resurrection will be offering John Rutter's *Requiem*. Luncheon will be served following the Mass in the Church's hall. For those of you who will be remaining in New York for the week-end, there will be a Remembrance Sunday High Mass at Resurrection the next day at eleven, with the Bishop of Richborough again preaching, the British, French, Belgian & Dutch consuls-general in attendance, and Fauré's *Requiem* offered that day.

Since that invitation, I have been honoured to be invited to be with the English Guild in November 2007 for their annual Requiem to take place at the Guild's London Church, St Stephen's Gloucester Road in Kensington. It is my hope that one or two other members of the Council will make the journey with me to help make the connexion. In a day when it is more and more difficult to witness to the truth of the Catholic doctrines of the communion of Saints, the Resurrection, and even the value of Holy Baptism and its connexion to the life, death and Resurrection of Our Lord, such sharing and mutual concern and care are more valuable than ever.

For some time, the Guild has met annually only for a Requiem Mass. The history of this goes back to the joint Requiem that the Guild once had with the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament in this country. The annual meeting of the Guild was for the Easter fiesta on or near the Feast of St Michael (our patron) on 8 May. When the CBS and the Guild had some differences of opinion about the Annual Requiem, the Guild's Council decided to sponsor the Requiem alone and abandon the Easter fiesta. In many ways, this makes perfect sense, but it means that we have missed the Easter note of the former annual mass and meetings. In 2007, with me and some of the Council making our way to London for the annual requiem there, it seems a good opportunity to return for one year only to the Easter fiesta which will stand as our annual mass and meeting for next year.

I am delighted that Father John Alexander has offered to host the Easter fiesta at St Stephen's, Providence, R. I., in April 2007. You will see more information

closer to the time. We will not, therefore, have a large public requiem in November 2007, although the Guild's dead will, of course, be remembered at masses throughout November at the Guild's National Shrine in New York.

Father Lane Davenport, while remaining a keenly interested Branch President and member of the Guild, has asked for some time off from the Council to allow some "new blood" to become involved. While we are naturally sorry to miss so intelligent and committed Catholic voice on the Council, we quite understand all the many claims there are on the time of a busy parish priest. The entire Council joins me in thanking Father Davenport, Rector of the Church of the Ascension & St Agnes in Washington, for his enthusiastic support, conscientious participation in the life of the Guild's Council, and welcoming hospitality several times to the Guild in his excellent and lovely church.

I mentioned in the last Intercession Paper the Guild's support for the building of the hospitality and pilgrims' centre at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in England. The Guild has supported this project as generously as we can, and recommend it highly to you. The Guild of All Souls has its Chantry Chapel in England in the Shrine's grounds, and the connexion between the Shrine and the Guild goes right back to Father Hope Patten, an enthusiastic member of the Guild, and the restorer of the Shrine. The Shrine Church's 75th Anniversary is this year, and the building project will offer a centre for those arriving at the Shrine either as pilgrims or visitors. It has been long needed. The US Friends have aimed to raise \$300,000 and the project is well underway. The Guild has given 10% of that amount, but we hope that many of our members may give on their own. There is a tear-out sheet in this number of the Intercession Paper which you may use to send your contributions along.

So often there is no point in taking notice of representations of the Faith in "popular culture", but at other times there is no alternative. We have been treated to the tawdry spectacle of the expensive film of the horrid book *The Da Vinci Code*. As silly as the book was, the film is even worse. Please bear in mind, and tell those who mention it, that this is simply a novel, the fancy of the author's imagination. It rests on no historical foundation whatsoever. This kind of Gnostic heresy has been circulating since the day Our Lord came forth from his tomb, and is the refuge of those who do not or will not believe in his Resurrection. They are to be pitied as well as criticised. While we certainly affirm the right of free expression, especially in art, one wonders whether this kind of project denigrating the very foundations of a world religion, would be so acclaimed were it to be one which ridiculed the foundations of Judaism, Islam or Buddhism. We would rightly regard such a project as unfortunate, insulting and counter-productive to the aims of a peaceful society. Why is it not so when Christianity is involved? Members of our Guild know full well the truth that Our Lord has risen victorious from death and has opened the way to everlasting life for all who truly seek it with him. We do not require or seek second-rate and

offensive fiction or films designed to insult our cherished beliefs. We would reject it aimed at another's beliefs, and we certainly reject it when aimed at ours.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as can attend the Guild's Annual Requiem on Saturday, 11 November 2006 at the Church of the Resurrection, East 74th Street between Park and Lexington Avenues in New York. It should be a lovely day.

Yours, in the Holy Souls,

Canon Barry E. B. Swain SSC,
Superior-General